What I Want For My Children

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September 2008

See online at: http://www.iwasthinking.ca/2008/09/19/what-i-want-for-my-children/

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Our children are amazing.

We brought them home. We sat and watched these tiny humans.
[This is a miracle.]

We marvelled at every perfectly tiny little finger and toe, their button noses, their rosebud mouths. Their softness and smell.
[I love this child.]

We woke up in the night, just to check if they were still breathing. We loved them with such intensity and knew, without a doubt, that we would jump in front of a bus to save them!
[I would do anything to protect them.]

And that love doesn't fade or become less intense as they grow. We still sneak into their rooms at night sometimes, watching them as they sleep, perhaps stroking their cheek softly, or planting a kiss on their forehead.
[They grow up so quicly.]

If it was a tough day, if we fought with them or yelled at them- then we stand there, feeling guilty and promising that we'll do better tomorrow - we'll find the patience, we'll figure out a better way.
We whisper quietly, "I love you."

And we worry.
Are we doing a good job as a parent? Am I doing enough? Or am I missing some important stuff? Life is so busy that we don't always have the time to be the parents we want to be.
[There's always too much to do.]

Then September comes and we take them to their schools. We walk into the classroom, feeling like we're ripping our heart out of our chest and reluctantly handing it over to a teacher that we don't even really know and saying "Here is my heart."

"Please, take care of it - it's so precious, so special to me. I don't know what I'd do without it. Please please - don't let it get hurt!"
[I'm afraid.]

We leave our children then, and we worry some more.

Are they learning enough? Will they be okay in this world?
Will they be successful? Will they make friends? Will they be happy?

So we expect an awful lot of teachers and schools.
[We expect so much.]

I want us to remember that we're all here for the same purpose - we care about kids.

"It's about creating an environment where every child can thrive." (David Truss from http://pairadimes.davidtruss.com/square-peg-round-hole/)

I want my children to have learning communities that **believe** in them. That inspire them to dream, that support them when they're struggling, that teach them to respect themselves and have empathy for those around them.

Some children show up in this world happy and unfettered. Others are more complicated - harder to reach.

I want teachers who believe that beneath it all, our children want to succeed and be happy, to be listened to and be loved.

I want my children to have teachers who **get involved**. Who respect my children as individuals and honour them each, learning about their unique strengths and gifts. I want teachers who allow them to learn in their own ways.

I want my children to have teachers who **ask questions** more often than they give answers. This is a complicated world and human beings are complicated creatures. They need adults who are learning with them, not teaching to them.

I want my children to have a voice and to have teachers who **listen** to them - not just to what they say, but also to the quiet whispers behind their words. The things that children may be too afraid to say and that we can only hear by listening with our hearts.

Really listening is how teachers will know how to help my children feel physically and emotionally safe and to help them take risks - because learning something new is always a risk!

And finally, I want my children to learn by example to **be curious**. I want teachers who model continuous learning - who self reflect, who seek new challenges, who strive to learn everyday.

Yes, we want a lot for our children.

And there's a critical questions we have to ask ourselves now:

What can we do to make sure
every school
every classroom
every student
every child
Will thrive?

There's something we need to understand:

There is no answer.

There is no SIMPLE answer.

There is no SINGLE answer.
In fact, there are probably as many solutions as there are teachers and students.

What can we do?

Be the change that you want to see in the world. -Ghandi
If these are the things that we want for our kids, then we have to do them for our teachers as well:

Always **believe** that teachers want what's best for our children.

Don't sit back and think someone else will figure it out.
Get involved. Get to know your children's teachers. Show them you support them as they work to help your children thrive.

Don't react or get defensive. **Ask questions**.

Be willing to **listen** and seek to understand the reasons behind the actions or decisions.

Be curious. Find out what your kids are learning. Find out about the issues that face our school districts.

Open a conversation about what's working and what's not, about what we all need.
With

- Your child
- Your teacher
- Your principal
- Your Superintendent
- Your School Board Trustees
- Your Government

Our children are worth it.
[They deserve nothing less.]

Change happens one person at a time.
What will **you** do today?